World Health Organisation Moves to End Classifying Trans Identities as Mental Illness

The World Health Organization today released an online version of International Classification of Diseases –ICD 11 that removes trans identities from the mental health disorders chapter. This is a historic achievement the global trans community has been fighting for over many years. It sets the fundament for a new era of reparation for done injustice and celebration of gender diversity.

All trans-related diagnoses have been removed from the chapter Mental health disorders. A new chapter, Conditions related to sexual health, has been added to ICD and it includes a new diagnosis of Gender incongruence. It is hoped that this shift will continue to give access to gender-affirming care while also ending a long history of so-called “conversion therapies”, forced medicalization, forced hospitalization, and forced sterilization for trans and gender diverse people.

Julia Ehrt, Executive Director of TGEU, on hearing this announcement says, “This is the result of tremendous effort by trans and gender diverse activists from around the world to insist on our humanity, and I am elated that the WHO agrees that gender identity is not a mental illness.”

Historically, the pathologisation of gender identity through ICD over the past decades has contributed to the enormous stigma, discrimination, harassment, criminalization, and abuse on the basis of gender identity and expression. There is much work to do from here to ensure that trans and gender diverse people are able to live in total fulfillment of the human rights, but this fundamental shift signals recognition that expressions of the full diversities of gender do not equal mental illness and should not be stigmatized.

“We call upon policy makers to follow suit and base legal gender recognition and gender affirming healthcare solely on self-determination of the person.” Adds Ehrt

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